

FUTURE IMPERFECT

Luke Scott follows in famous father Ridley's footsteps, making his directorial debut with the sci-fi thriller *Morgan*. Words Gill Pringle

Between *Alien*, *Blade Runner*, *Prometheus* and *The Martian*, 78-year-old Ridley Scott has taken audiences into deepest space, exploring alien life, genetic engineering and artificial intelligence.

Therefore it's no surprise that his son, Luke Scott, 47, makes his directorial debut with sci-fi drama *Morgan*, exploring a future world of bio-engineered humanity.

Co-produced by his father, *Morgan* boasts an A-list cast most first-time directors would kill for, including Kate Mara and Paul Giamatti.

The result is a polished, provocative, wholly absorbing venture into a chilling near future where it's hard to tell robot from human.

"Ridley was definitely tough but also a very fair dad," says Luke, who was raised on his father's movie sets, serving as a second unit director on his father's recent films *Exodus: Gods and Kings* and *The Martian*.

"Dad instilled in all his kids that you've got to work hard. He insisted we worked as production assistants and make tea, because making tea isn't such a menial task. The most important thing it teaches you is humility; you better make the best f-ing cup of tea or else you'll be in deep sh-t!" laughs Luke when *STACK* meets with father and son in Los Angeles.

Following in the Scott family footsteps has not always been easy; Luke's uncle Tony directed blockbusters *Top Gun*, *Beverly Hills Cop II*, *Enemy of the State* and *Man on Fire* before his suicide four years ago.

If the Scott name opens doors then it also comes with many preconceptions. "If anyone's got a problem with it, then I'm sorry. But I'm at a point in my career and

life where I know what I'm doing. The Ridley name is something to be respected and cherished. It's been an enormous boon and help to me," says Luke, whose father's non-sci-fi films, *Thelma & Louise*, *Gladiator* and *Black Hawk Down* all earned Oscar nods.

Reflecting on his career, Ridley says, "Over the years, you learn to not compromise. I think when you begin, you tend to compromise for all kinds of reasons, usually based out of insecurity, because you are on a new treadmill, and you don't quite know what you're doing. But when you get really experienced, and if you're going to do my job, you should know what the hell you're doing when you walk on the floor.

"In my case, I learned as I was going, there was no formal training. I made mistakes and gradually learned not to compromise. But I try to be fun, don't I?" he asks his son.

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Scott senior is a harsh critic. "You just have to go out and do it and don't pontificate. People say that it's harder to get a film made today than ever before. That's bullsh-t. You've got so many video devices that you can go out this weekend with your friends and make a movie and stop whining about it."

Just like his father, Luke predicts a bleak future for mankind, as reflected in the themes of *Morgan*, showcasing brilliant newcomer Anya Taylor-Joy as the titular genetically-engineered creation. "I think bio-engineered humans are a very real future. They offer the greatest challenge to humanity, simply because it's like once the germ gets into the species, its Goodbye Humans Part 1 and Hello Humans Part 2. We're all going to die!"

Likewise, Ridley suggests, "I think we're so far down the line in speculation. Far more, I think, than is published or discussed. It's a little like when you get the very smartest computer you can possibly design,

the first thing you're going to do is to get that computer to design another computer which is smarter than they are. Then you get these two computers to commune and, once you do that, you're in real trouble because they're so far ahead of you and they've already disconnected this and connected that; they're thinking miles ahead of you... and I think they've done it already."

Shot in Northern Ireland, Mara and Taylor-Joy worked hard on boxing, ballet and stunt training for their fight scenes in *Morgan*.

When Luke refers to Mara as a "tough cookie," she pivots, shooting him a steely look. "That's diplomatic. Total badass is also acceptable. I'm not sweet or accommodating. I had to eliminate a lot of emotions you would naturally have as a human being. I can be really emotionless, can't I Luke?"

For Taylor-Joy, their fight scenes were an exercise in trust. "We worked really hard to have that physicality. If you don't really trust the person you're throwing punches at or if you're receiving them, you're not going to get a good scene because you're going to be playing it safe, so out of trust, you kind of torture each other a little bit more," she says.

As to his father's verdict upon seeing the final cut of *Morgan*, Luke smiles. "'Good job, son. I'm very proud of you,' I think is what he said, before asking, 'now what's your next job?'"

→ *Morgan* is in cinemas on Nov 17.

